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COMMONWEAL

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Why All the Shooting?

THERE SEEMS to be altogether too much fuss and flying feathers over expected shortages and restrictions in the offing for the American consumer. The prospect of a simpler mode of existence, of fewer models to choose from for household or wardrobe, of less opportunity to wander through the countryside at random (if there really is a gasoline shortage), of hanging on to the old car a while longer, is not too devastating. For those not in the business the threatened restrictions on beauty shops, silk hosiery, chromium auto decorations, and folding boxes and the difficulties in procuring anti-freeze can somehow or other be borne. The prospect of new drives to utilize waste paper and the fields of derelict jallopies that constitute such an eyesore at the outskirts of every American city is a positive delight. But it has been obvious all along that the terrific expansion of our armament industry would be certain to disrupt normal production. There is nothing surprising or unusual about all of this. Shortages of basic materials simply mean fewer consumers' goods, less choice for the American housewife and her mate. It is hard to see, quite, how this situation is linked up with a call to national self-sacrifice, with the larger question of national morale about which the administration is so patently concerned. What were the objectives of the aluminum and oil conservation drives? How are they related to the actual defense industries? And what do their proponents have in mind when they talk about the national morale? Definition and program are needed. These shortages do fall hard on the heads of those engaged in the production of many peacetime goods and services. There are about fifty American towns where dependence on one or more of these threatened industries will soon affect large segments of the community. But why try to whip up the American consumer into a frenzy of self-sacrifice over these restrictions on his choice? Surely he can accept a simpler range without all this government fanfare. Surely the national morale rests on a deeper and broader base.

Segregation

LAST WEEK in these columns appeared an account of the incidents at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Fort Robinson, Arkansas, which give some indication of the race problem in the Army. In one case the killing of a White M.P. by a Negro soldier and that soldier's death at the hands of another White M.P. was followed by a round-up of colored troops in no way connected with the shooting and including non-commissioned officers and a chaplain. These men were subjected to intimidation and some of them to physical maltreatment. The Arkansas incident was even worse; colored troops and their White officers while on duty were subjected to violence and insult by armed state troopers and civilians.

Now another incident is reported (in the *Amsterdam News*) from Oswego, New York. The facts seem rather sketchy. A soldier of the 369th New York National Guard, a regiment made up entirely of Negroes, officers and men alike, and a regiment with a fine history and *esprit-de-corps,* was left behind in the post hospital near Fort Ontario when his outfit moved on to Fort Edwards, Massachusetts. He was suffering from a broken arm. It is reported that a group of White soldiers from Delaware invaded the hospital and forced the injured man to leave. It is further reported that White troops from New York who have been fraternizing with Negroes have been threatened by those from Delaware.

The more this whole question is examined, the more it becomes apparent that doing away with segregation is the only practical solution, short of eliminating Negroes from the Army entirely. For it is segregation which largely makes such episodes possible. If the engineers at Fort Robinson had been marching in mixed battalions, interference by the state police would have worn a very different aspect than what it did. If the busload of troops in the Fort Bragg killing had been mixed, the attitude of the M.P.'s would have been far less hasty.

The policy of segregation does nothing but pile up the injustices and make the whole situation worse. The Army is said to have a shortage of "places" to put Negro draftees. This means that

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draft boards have in effect to pass over Negroes and induct Whites ahead of their turns, obviously working an injustice on the latter and destroying the very essence of the idea of choice by lot. In some districts every last White man of appropriate age will soon have been inducted—a very unfair situation—and hundreds of eligible Negroes will warm their heels, only because the Army refuses to admit them to full citizenship.

When will the Department of Justice do something about the Arkansas incident? Or the Army make up its mind to accept the clean-cut, the just way out of a very undemocratic mess?

The Lindbergh Speech

LINDBERGH'S speech in Iowa, referring to Jews, was a bad speech. Examined in itself, it appears to us bad principally for the same reason most of the talk about the war is bad: it was simplified to the point of distortion. The three principal Lindbergh agitators for war, "The British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt administration," cannot be separated out and held to such mathematical accounting as Lindbergh suggests in his speech. The movement which has carried our country along toward the killing war is wider, less cohesive and exclusive, and less personal. The tendency of the speech to define these agitators as *foreign* to the US is arbitrary. The "British" wing blends from the Ambassador right down the line to the last Mid-Western Daughter of the Revolution who bundles, politically, for Britain. There is no distinct line between the foreign and the native. The administration is American. American Jews are American. The policy to put the country finally into the war may be, as this writer thinks, against the best interests and proper duties of America, but it is nevertheless a policy propounded by people unquestionably American. (How about Roosevelt himself, Wallace, Morgenthau, Knox, Ickes, Hopkins, etc., etc.? There is no possibly denying that they are Americans.) It would be hard to find proper social and economic categories for judgments about war policy; it would be impossible to find categories of race or religion along which war feelings line up. What, for instance, about the powerful Jewish element of the Socialist Party, consistently and strongly anti-war?

Taken by itself, in the abstract, however, the speech was not so bad. Indeed, it said many true things about the war policy, and presented some searching problems and questions to those who want us in the war which they will not answer. The racism of the speech was not to any important degree in its bare words. It did repeat a bad and anti-Semitic error when it went on about the "danger" to the Jews arising from their "large ownership and influence in our . . . press . . . and our government." Jews have but a slight place in the publishing field, newspaper or magazine—one percent would be liberal. They have a score or more out of thousands of noticeable newspapers. The reference to the government is simply a smear, fortunately well faded by this time. But the speech was delivered in a specific environment and time—surcharged with non-rational currents of belligerency, suspicion, partisanship, blind anger, fear. (If Lindbergh is not working against these currents, what is he doing? *They* are in the general current of violence and war.) The speech could not expect a reaction of pure reason and logical analysis. It raised the question of anti-Semitism, of the Jews and the war, and it could not possibly lead or guarantee a resolution of the subject along the lines of reason, justice and charity and true peace.

Those who want to keep the country out of the maelstrom, those who share much of Lindbergh's critical view of the apparent policy of the administration, and who have felt that he personally has not been justly evaluated or understood, must deeply regret the Iowa speech. First because of the injustice that may result for Americans and others of Jewish race or religion and because of the opening it gave for anti-Semitism which can ruin so much and so many. Then we fear the counter-blast against those who want the country to keep from the total war. An unprincipled smear campaign against the anti-interventionists could utilize the Iowa speech to discredit those who oppose full war participation. Anti-Semitism is an element and a symptom of the calamity from which all groups and classes of America should want to save as much of the world as possible.

The Hoover Speech

EX-PRESIDENT HERBERT HOOVER gave an example of an excellent address against the administration foreign policy on September 16 in Chicago. Perhaps it wasn't a strong enough speech, perhaps it was too reminiscent of the old *laissez-faire* "free enterprise," along with which Hoover went down ten years ago, undoubtedly it was weakened by the disastrous presidential term of Hoover and his last campaign, but still this speech was clear, definite and had excellent spirit. Hoover speaks with the authority of much experience, including that of having been attacked as an Englishman when he was in office. . . . "There are other ways than going into this war, to secure reparation for transgression of our just rights and respect for them." Hoover listed the bases of his foreign policy and a series of actions which add up not to isolation nor to intervention. He expressed optimism about the internal breakdown of nazism. And he ended his speech with sound and warm rhetoric: "Are we now to march out into the desert of European war and see the wells of freedom dried up behind us?"

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*The Lost Land**

How American Catholicism was cast in an urban mold.

By **Theodore Maynard**

THE UNITED STATES was founded upon the agrarian system. Though forces were already at work pointing to a great extension of commerce, not even the most ardent mercantilist could visualize anything like the state of affairs destined to come, and could he have visualized it, he would have been horrified. As Charles and Mary Beard write: "Like Aristotle two thousand years before and agricultural philosophers through all the succeeding ages, Jefferson distrusted the arts of commerce and industry, the arts of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest. . . . As a corollary, he was convinced that the American system of liberty would come to an end when the people were congested in cities and dependent for a livelihood upon the caprices of trade."

Jefferson was of course right in his general view. Even apart from the special issues with which this book is concerned, most thoughtful minds have had moments when they have been almost paralyzed with fear at our fantastic, top-heavy and ever-expanding industrialism. It is not necessary to denounce the machine with A. J. Penty or Eric Gill, or to hide in the unrealities of modern medievalism to believe that our world has released forces likely to wreck it, unless a solution be quickly found. And where else is it to be sought except in the rediscovery of the lost land, in a return to the basic and normal occupation of man?

Perhaps American liberty, despite Jefferson's gloomy though amply justified forebodings, may survive, even under industrial conditions so inimical to it. What is unquestionable is that a healthy American life has in our present urbanization its most insidious enemy. But for that matter, urbanization is the deadly foe of all human life. To no function of human life is it more inimical than to that of the spirit. It may indeed encourage certain artistic activities, but only on condition that they serve as a decorative appendage to industrialism. Science itself will be increasingly brought under bondage to an almost unimaginably tyrannical master, who will think of it merely as technology. Therefore it seems probable that technology will in the end destroy itself, that the city of skyscrapers will be levelled in a night by the inventive genius born but to commit suicide. A solution may of course be ultimately found; it has certainly not been found, or hardly dimly imagined, as yet—except for a solution so simple as to strike most people as naïve: the return to a true "normalcy."

The declining birth-rate is not merely a consequence of birth-control. Modern life is the enemy of life itself. Dr. O. E. Baker points out in a paper read before the Catholic Rural Life Conference of October, 1935, that "the birthrate began to decline in the industrial sections of the United States many decades before information as to artificial methods of birth control was disseminated even among the upper classes." And he quotes a German authority, Dr. Ungern-Sternberg, as saying: "The *causa causans* of the declining birthrate within the western European sphere of civilization is the striving spirit, a derivation of capitalistic mentality."

The case has been presented from another angle by a distinguished Catholic sociologist in an article in THE COMMONWEAL, entitled "Cities Kill" (August 2, 1940). The author, Monsignor L. G. Ligutti, is a leader in the rural life movement and has put his theories into application—about which more in a moment. He points out that an urban population has to be constantly replenished from country districts, because it dies out in cities. As Bishop O'Hara of Kansas City said at the same conference at which Dr. Baker spoke: "Most cities have only about three-fourths of the number of children necessary to maintain their present size, not to speak of further growth." If this should be alarming to the nation in general, it is especially alarming to the Catholic Church, as it means that our city Catholics will be replaced by pagans (or if we are lucky, Protestants) from rural communities, with the result that the cities, which are now the strongholds of Catholicism, will be lost. Father La Farge put it bluntly in an article in *America* for November 9, 1929: "Without rural life, in a couple of generations we shall begin closing a fair-sized proportion of our city churches in the United States."

In saying this—mainly through the mouths of others—I do not wish to suggest that there is nothing to be said for city life. Cowper's line in *The Task*, "God made the country, and man made

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the town," is a trifle too facile. Cities are not necessarily cesspools of iniquity. So far from this being the case, there is much to the argument that—supposing one can adequately house a family of children in a city—more chance exists of their being untouched by vice than in a village. This, however, is in passing: the central and inescapable point is that quite literally and in a physical sense cities destroy those who live in them.

It may be, nevertheless, that the opinion of Father La Farge, just quoted, is too fatalistic. But there can be no doubt that against the forces already at work we seem doomed—unless these can be arrested, or unless a new apologetic method is devised—to lose ground as Catholics. There is no use for us to pretend otherwise. We cannot expect to grow by virtue of a birth-rate noticeably superior to that of non-Catholics; at any rate we are not growing in that way. If a change is to come, it must be by means not yet fully explored. Specifically one of the means—not the only means of course, but the one at the moment under consideration—must be a policy that will seek to do for rural districts what has already been partially effected for those in the cities.

Double policy

This policy, which is already being promoted, has two distinct functions, though both are directed toward the same end. One is the evangelization of the country (which I leave until later), the other is to encourage a Catholic settlement on the land.

The German immigrants never presented any serious problem in this matter. Though some stayed in cities, those who were farmers in their native land were perfectly willing to be farmers when they settled in America. Thus one can find counties in Ohio and elsewhere in which nearly everybody is a farmer and nearly everybody is a Catholic. From the roof of the monastery of the Fathers of the Precious Blood at Carthagena, for instance, a dozen spires of Catholic churches may be seen. And it is evident from the look of the farms and the farm-houses around that these people are happy and prosperous. Sobriety and thrift and industry could not fail to make them such.

Not many immigrants of other races have rooted themselves in the soil. In Iowa there are rural groups of Bohemians; in the Southwest there are a few similar groups of Italians. The predominant Catholic body, however—the Irish—are very seldom farmers. The vast majority of them are in the cities—where they lie under sentence of death.

There were, to be sure, early efforts to settle Irish Catholic immigrants in country districts, but they were too few and too feeble to accomplish much. In 1850 Thomas D'Arcy McGee in his "History of the Irish Settlers in North America" warned, "The torrent of emigration from Ireland must in a few years abate its force. Whatever we can do for ourselves as a people must be done before the close of the century; or the epitaph of our race will be written in the West with the single sentence, 'Too late!'" The warning was not heeded. The Irish immigration into America continued to be virtually confined to the cities.

The really appalling thing is that this was encouraged by those who captained the Church in the United States. Though we can now see that it was an all but irreparable mistake, at the time it looked the obvious solution to an immediate problem. Greatly as the number of priests had increased, not only by American vocations but by the arrival of recruits for the clergy from abroad, they were still insufficient for the spiritual needs of the tidal wave of the incoming Catholics. Therefore they were kept in populous centers and the immigrants had to go to these centers if they wished to practice their religion.

During colonial days, and the early days of the Republic, the proportion was about one priest to a thousand of the laity. But in those days the priests had to travel vast distances on horseback, and very few of the small scattered Catholic settlements could maintain a pastor, even had there been one to spare. Bishop Shaughnessy in his book "Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith?" gives a striking table of statistics bearing on this question. In the year 1790 there were 34 priests ministering to a Catholic population of 35,000; in 1920 there were 21,019 priests ministering to 19,828,000 souls. Today there are 35,839 priests in a Catholic body of perhaps 25,000,000, with over 17,000 training for the priesthood. During these hundred and fifty years the average territory to be covered has not only shrunk absolutely in square miles but relatively much more because of the new means of rapid transportation. In square miles alone the decrease between 1790 and 1920 was from an average of 12,270 to 141 square miles. It is now under ninety square miles to a priest. Yet even allowing for all this, there are still many rural groups that rarely see a priest. For these the Extension Society of Chicago tries to provide funds for the building of a church, and has done much excellent work. Other means employed are the use of traveling cars and automobiles which are so many traveling chapels. But in spite of everything, the sad fact has to be recorded that many Catholics are still not reached at all.

One can therefore understand the policy advocated by some of the most prominent ecclesiastics of the past century. They were aware that thousands upon thousands of the Catholics who had come to these shores and had gone into the interior had lost the Faith for no other reason than that not enough priests were available. It seemed better, the situation being what it was, to herd the Catholic immigrants into the cities where they

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would find churches and pastors and schools, whatever might be the evils of city life.

The motive was generally commendable and the policy apparently sound. It was, however, as events have since proved, a ghastly error, which sacrificed ultimate good to immediate convenience. But another motive, by no means so admirable, was also operating in the case of many pastors. This was unveiled by Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Peoria in his "Religious Mission of the Irish People": "At points where large numbers of Catholics have been gathered, costly churches, and occasionally schools also, have been erected, and these structures are frequently still encumbered with debts. It is in accordance with psychological laws that, in such circumstances, the pastors should feel no great enthusiasm for a cause which might have the effect of lessening the revenues with which they are to meet their obligations. . . . It is not surprising then, that instances should be known in which the pastors deliberately set their faces against any attempt to persuade their people that the life of an operative in a factory is not as desirable as any other. And it is held that in so acting they are but following the example of one of the ablest and most enlightened prelates of the Church in America."

A prelate in opposition

That prelate was of course John Hughes. He sincerely believed that the rural colonization movement was a mistake, as it would increase the difficulty of providing priests for the people, if they became scattered over the countryside instead of being congregated in the larger centers. But with the opposition, at all events in the case of men of smaller stature than himself, went a more selfish motive—that of protecting the material investment. Had the city Catholics gone to the land, another large investment would have been necessary with no certainty, they argued, that the money sunk in such a venture would bring adequate spiritual dividends. The psychological factor that Spalding indicated operated powerfully, in a large number of instances, not only to keep Catholics in the cities but to buttress the economic system which was keeping them there. The pastors were profiting by the pay-envelope—not so much personally but as a means of deriving support for what were often unnecessarily large and expensive ecclesiastical plants. It was not that this factor consciously operated or was admitted to be a motive, but it was inevitable that the pastors should think in terms of their own work in a particular parish. They, like their bishops—and their people—were victims of circumstances. Accordingly a material dead weight was joined to a real zeal for the salvation of souls to prevent colonization plans from being carried out.

Moreover, nearly all the new Irish immigrants, as well as many of the older ones, were too poor to migrate further. The Irish Colonization Society founded in 1879, mainly through the efforts of John Ireland and John Lancaster Spalding, was obliged to refuse countless applications from people who said they would like to settle on the land but who could not put up even the small sum of three hundred dollars asked from them. After some destitute people were taken out, it was discovered by bitter experience that a large proportion of them were of an extremely shiftless type, the worst possible material for a project of this character. And though a large amount of money was raised to back the undertaking, it was not a tenth of what was required to insure success. The bishops of the East—with notable exceptions, among whom was the great Gibbons—gave little financial support to the work. Without their backing it was not possible to accomplish much.

After 1900 mass colonization was out of the question. By then all suitable land had been taken up. Now there can only be penetration by individuals, though if this penetration is organized, a steady flow of a few families a year to this and that community where there is already a parish in existence is perfectly feasible.

This is the method now envisaged by those Catholic leaders who think in terms of rural life. And there have been several remarkable developments along these lines, particularly that described by Fathers Ligutti and Rawe in their book, "Rural Roads to Security." The gist of their plan appears in the paper Father Rawe read to the conference at Fargo, North Dakota, in 1936. "In order to reduce tenancy and re-establish the prerequisite widespread family land ownership we shall have to find the sources of easy credit, to be supplied for the purchase of these family farms in suitable localities, under long term loans at a low rate of interest. If the banking system continues to refuse to cooperate, we shall have to have recourse to our growing credit unions, to private individuals who have money and the sympathy for our program to forego higher interest rates in other investments, or to government long-term, low-interest credit facilities." That this is not so chimerical as it may perhaps sound is proved by what has been achieved by Monsignor Ligutti at the Granger settlement in Iowa. The book to which I have just referred gives a fascinating account of how a group made up mostly of Polish and Italian miners were shown how they might acquire homesteads adequate for the raising of the family food. Essentially it is a matter of self-help under competent direction. As such it not only brings economic security but develops invaluable moral qualities.

The Irish

With regard to the Irish themselves, with whom this chapter has been chiefly concerned, though

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they are to be encountered everywhere, the overwhelming mass are still crowded in the great cities. There they now enjoy a vastly better social and economic position than that of their despised forebears, and many of them have grown not only prosperous but rich. It would now, I fear, be virtually impossible to persuade them to migrate to the countryside. Nevertheless, for them the old problem exists in a new form: they have indeed "got on"; the question now is whether, as urban residents, they will survive much longer. The fact that they are very numerous conceals the grisly truth that they already tend to diminish rather than to increase. America today would beyond all doubt have several million more citizens of Irish blood had they only gone to the country instead of to densely populated centers.

All this is very ominous for the future of the Catholic Church in America. What we see is that our cities have a huge Catholic population;* what we miss seeing is that the cities have constantly to be replenished with new blood from the country districts, and that these are unable to supply Catholics in any considerable numbers. The conclusion is inescapable: within a few generations a very serious situation will confront the Church, which is no longer able to fill up its ranks by immigration, and must expect therefore—should present statistical trends continue—a sharp decline.

In spite of this there is no need for excessive gloom. An active movement is going on, one initiated by Bishop O'Hara of Kansas City who, before he was raised to the episcopate, was director of the Rural Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and is still doing all he can to promote an American Catholic return to the lost land. His policy and that of those associated with him, if rather a long-range program, is already achieving results. Closely connected with it is the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, which the New Code of Canon Law ordains be established in every parish. This, by means of the cooperation of priests and Sisters and competent lay-teachers, has been notably successful in conducting catechetical vacation schools for those who are not otherwise easily reached—and about half our Catholic children are still not attending parochial schools. What can be done in this way was shown by Bishop O'Hara when he was at Great Falls in Montana. Within a year he had vacation schools in operation in every district in his diocese. And what can be done in the country can be still more effectively done for the neglected children of the cities. Along with it all goes a new mode of apologetics. From this, too, we may hope much.

It has always been recognized that the Catholic rural community has special and difficult problems to solve. Even when a good school can be maintained, the cultural advantages of a city are usually lacking. Therefore up to now Catholic energies have as a rule been devoted to preserving the Faith and of virtually renouncing all attempts to extend it. Obviously much more than that is called for, if America is to become a Catholic country—and nothing less is our apostolic mission. That is why one must hail the sign, the cloud no larger than a man's hand, which appears in the heroic enterprise the Home Missioners of America have set before themselves. A small body of priests, founded by Father W. Howard Bishop on the outskirts of Cincinnati, are daring to address themselves to the task of rural evangelization with the frank admission at the outset that large sections of the United States have to be approached as a foreign missionary approaches the heathen.

Here then is the present state of affairs put in its most graphic form: populous Catholic cities, which are much too populous for their own good or that of the Church; and wide tracts of the country practically untouched by Catholicism. Only of one thing can we be sure: that the Church will answer the challenge; that no situation will ever be abandoned as finally lost; that when all hope seems gone the Faith will triumph. But before this can be, Amercian Catholics will have to lay aside their complacency and, trusting providence in the right way, set out to achieve the impossible.

* This is the situation at a glance: the archdioceses of Chicago and Boston each have 1,500,000 Catholics, New York over a million and Brooklyn almost a million. New York state has over three millions of Catholics, Pennsylvania over two millions, Illinois and Massachusetts nearly two millions, New Jersey, Ohio, and California each well over a million. But North Carolina has only a little over eleven thousand Catholics, and Nevada and Utah not many more.

Emergence

(Impressions of the arcana for Dr. Judd)

This cool, bright room that knows the histories
Of what unpredictable mysteries!
Each muted sound, an echoing gong: confused, all sights—
Gleam of cold steel . . . masked faces . . . And the lights
Go down . . . Down? So, then, the darkling, deep,
Unfathomed well of dreamless sleep?

This dim, inane and blank abyss . . .
Evolving . . . waves . . . of silence . . .
What is this?

For only after can we know
How hands have worked with secret show
Of skill, unguessed as yet. —What inter-play
Of faculties (who, now, can say?)
Here sentient, controlled, alert
That from this mystery shall come no hurt.

Now . . . up from the depths where we have lain,
Now . . . into the lustral ecstasy of pain,
Oh, now . . . the light again!

ANTHONY MISUKIEWICZ.

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My Political Vocation

What drew an Italian priest to politics.

By **Luigi Sturzo**

ALREADY half a century has elapsed since the time when my aim was to obtain a chair in philosophy in one of Italy's universities. Italy was then experiencing the first fervor of thomistic revival: Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* was just ten years old; my teacher, a good Franciscan, had left his dear Saint Bonaventure to follow Saint Thomas. Surely it was a noble ideal to bring Saint Thomas to the state universities, where positivism prevailed and where Hegel's idealism was beginning to gain a foothold. Absorbed as I was by my studies, I was teaching literature at the seminary of Caltagirone, and I directed its Schola Cantorum. The outward world was to me indifferent or unknown. Some of its echoes penetrated the seminary (the socialist ferment was beginning in Sicily), but they left me cold. It was in the following year (1891) when, in May, the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* was published, that I caught the first glimpse of that world. We, the youth who loved Leo XIII as the modern pope, the reformist pope, the genial pope, were captivated by *Rerum Novarum*. But after a hurried reading and some explanatory talk by one of the professors to the seminarians (one of them wrote a poem on it), nothing more was done about it; in a short time only the name "workers' pope," that was given to Leo in the Catholic newspapers, was remembered.

Another year went by, and there broke out in Sicily revolts of peasants and of sulphur miners (who had formed the so called "Fasci," not to be confused with the fascist movement of 1919). The results were violent and in some places bloody; they had been incited partly by the socialists, and partly by an economic crisis that made even more felt the miserable condition of some of the workers and peasants. That was the period of the mass emigration from Southern Italy and Sicily to North and South America. The government declared a state of siege in Sicily and sent down a governor with full powers. The repression was hard; the leading agitators were condemned to long terms of imprisonment (later pardoned). From that moment the social-economic problem of Sicily was regarded as urgent. Various public relief measures were planned. Many wrote and spoke about them; bishops and Catholics held meetings, the papal encyclical was recalled, some timid initiatives began to appear, everyone was in expectation.

I was already ordained, and for some months I was in doubt whether to devote myself to practical activities or follow my philosophical avocation. The latter choice prevailed, and I went to Rome and enrolled in the Thomistic Academy and the Gregorian University. But it was in Rome, while in the midst of my studies, that I was really attracted to Catholic social activities. I was soon an active member of Catholic clubs, of the anti-slavery society and I know not of how many other groups. What impressed me most was the sight of unheard miseries in the workers' quarters of Rome (where the old Ghetto used to be), which I completely covered on Holy Saturday in 1895, as I had been asked by the parish to bless the homes. For several days I felt sick and did not eat. I got hold of some social literature, I sought out what the socialists and humanitarians were doing and tried to get acquainted with workers' leagues and co-operatives. For a month Saint Thomas and Saint Augustine, De Luca on canon law and Bucceroni's casuistry were left to gather dust: my mind was elsewhere. The commemoration of the fourth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* by the "Artistica Operaia" of Rome found me seated with the more enthusiastic.

As soon as I returned to Caltagirone for the vacation I set to work. That very year I founded a Catholic Diocesan Committee, workers', farmers' and students' associations; I considered the possibility of founding a rural credit bank and artisans' mutual aid society. The work grew very rapidly; I was called to the neighboring towns; I traveled frequently through the province of Catania, finding everywhere enthusiastic and faithful collaborators. I then returned to Rome to complete my studies.

* * *

In those years the name and program of "Christian Democracy" was spreading through Italy. The word aroused enthusiasm or suspicion, depending on whether the circle in question was ready to accept it or feared its realization. One who defended it with a clear vision of its meaning and limits was Giuseppe Toniolo. I met him in Rome and became his true disciple on the occasion

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of one of his famous lectures on Christian democracy. His renown as professor of political economy at the University of Pisa was great even outside the Catholic circles. For a papal or temporalist Catholic (as one was then contemptuously called) to obtain a position in the University of Pisa was very difficult, except for some very extraordinary merit. (It is interesting to note here how in those years, besides Toniolo, Contardo Ferrini and Giuseppe Moscato were also professors in the State Universities in Italy. Now for all three preliminary processes for their beatification have been initiated.) The ascetic countenance of Professor Toniolo, his bright and calm voice, his actions and words, his profound conviction attracted crowds of students to his lectures. Though Toniolo was not an organizer and did not pretend to be a leader, he had a following throughout Italy and was held in great esteem in Vatican circles and in learned circles throughout Europe. He was the scholar, the theoretician, and the apostle of Christian democracy. He had been one of the collaborators in the preparation of the *Rerum Novarum*. Others attempted the work of organizing: Valente in Turin, Grugni and Vico Nechhi in Milan, Murri in Rome, Mangano and Torregrossa in Palermo, to name but a few. Unfortunately Murri (who for several years was the leader of the left wing of the movement) mixed himself with modernism, quarreled with the Vatican and unfrocked himself.

Back in Caltagirone I was named professor of philosophy and sociology at the episcopal seminary, devoting all my free time to the social movement. I founded a weekly (*La Croce di Costantino*) and became a propounder of Christian democracy and of social work for the whole of Sicily. At that time (1898) renewed tremors shook Italy from Milan to Catania; another period of state of siege followed; the socialist heads Turati, Treves and Defelice (to mention the most noted) and the famous Catholic journalist of Milan, Don Davide Albertario, were sentenced to more than twenty years imprisonment by military courts for having defended the workers' cause (Don Albertario in the name of Christian democracy). All the Catholic associations together with the socialist ones were dissolved by the government. Then Leo XIII made a public protest. But the reaction did not last long; political liberties and constitutional guarantees were soon restored.

At about that time the Christian democratic workers of Caltagirone placed my name in the municipal elections. Thus began my public life. But with success came difficulties. The bishop of Caltagirone, a pious and holy person who liked me very much, became deeply concerned over the rapid diffusion of Christian democracy in his diocese. There was no lack of *bien pensants* who complained to him of the agitators who kept stirring up the feelings of workers and farmers. The bishop wrote about it to Rome, and Cardinal Rampolla (Leo XIII's Secretary of State), answering him in the name of the pope, said that "if democracy is truly Christian, it will do much good to Italy and to the world."

The bishop told me nothing, neither of the letter nor of the answer. That happened at the beginning of 1900. In the summer of that year pilgrimages to Rome were encouraged and I led that of Caltagirone, sprinkled with a good many Christian democrats. It was then that I personally approached the great pope who addressed me with words of paternal benevolence which I shall never forget. Later Cardinal Rampolla, with whom I was on friendly terms, since he was a Sicilian too, asked me if I had been satisfied with the letter he had sent to my bishop. I guessed what had taken place and answered yes. When I mentioned the matter to my bishop, he merely smiled. It is clear that the approval of the authorities need not always be made known and explicit.

* * *

In those years I continued to teach philosophy and sociology at the seminary, and despite everything, I persevered in my original program by enrolling in the University of Catania where I hoped later to start my academic career. However even there Christian democratic friends and organizers sought me out to give speeches and to help start rural credit banks. There were no congresses, conferences or meetings either in Sicily or in Italy at which I was not present. But I could not undertake teaching, a university career, municipal activity with its hard fight, journalism (at that time a large Catholic daily, *Il Sole,* was founded in Palermo by Catholics and I was one of the promoters), leadership of workers' leagues and cooperatives all at the same time. The great peasant agitations added a new factor to the situation. At that time the socialists were not the only ones to dominate the field; the Christian democrats of Sicily already held a position if not superior certainly equal to that of the socialists, owing to their practical activities and to the numbers of their followers.

Now I had to decide one way or the other, and a certain happening decided my life work. In Palagonia, a community of about eight thousand inhabitants not far from Caltagirone, there was serious unrest among the wage laborers tilling the orange groves owned by a charitable institution of Palermo. They hoped to obtain a community of ownership. After several unsuccessful attempts, the heads of the towns, urged by the prefect of the province, turned to me for a plan, which the prefect himself would present to the landowners in the name of the government. I set myself to it with all my strength; I went to the place of the

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controversy, studied the question, discussed it, sought advice, asked for financial aid at different rural banks and finally offered a plan to the prefect. But I found him changed; he met coolly my urgent representations; I learned later that the socialist heads of the province, who were very strong and feared, had complained to him that a priest should be asked to solve such an important affair. Then the landowners too refused to discuss the plan. This aroused the peasants to rebellion. The repression was bloody: many dead and about a hundred wounded. Palagonia went into mourning. This was August, 1902. Everyone understood that the change in policies was responsible for the trouble: after having led the people to expect a proximate solution, all hope was suddenly dashed by a negative.

But what was my surprise when a few months later, in Messina, after a well-received speech of mine on local liberties at the Second National Congress of Italian Communes, deputy De Felice, leader of the socialists of Catania, singled me out as the one responsible for the blood shed at Palagonia! I then mounted the gallery and defended myself, relating the bare facts, and the assembly, in the majority radical and socialist, stood by me.

My way was found: when I returned to Caltagirone, I resigned my chair of philosophy (keeping the sociology for two more years). I gave new life to the municipal organization of Sicily and was nominated to the council on charitable institutions in my city. I also led a strike of more than eighty thousand peasant laborers for three months until their working agreements had been improved.

There followed my appointment as member of the National Council of Italian Communes, and when the Municipal Council was dissolved, and elections were pending, as provisional executive of my town. In the following general elections (1905), the Christian democrats of Caltagirone won a majority and I was elected mayor. I was victorious in the provincial elections, too, and became the leader of the opposition in the provincial council against a majority of radical socialists.

It seemed to me then, that the time had come to realize the idea of a national party among Catholic democrats. Since my activity and position gave me a national standing, I made a public talk on this question.*

* * *

I did not cause open opposition, but, on the contrary, met with wide approval. Mistrust, however, was not absent. It was generally thought that my idea was premature; and it was. It is true that Pius X had displayed a rather favorable attitude towards the intervention of the Catholics in the political field, in the attempt to oppose the socialist wave; but he did not intend to go beyond the so-called policy of *caso per caso*. Little by little a small group of deputies elected by Catholics and of open Catholic profession began to be formed. In the Vatican it was clearly said that they were *cattolici deputati,* and by no means *deputati cattolici,* in order to avoid attributing to the Catholics elected deputies any religious mandate or special representation of the Church's interest in parliament. Thus, while avoiding the creation of a political party on a confessional basis (something far removed from my thoughts) it came to pass that Catholics too brought their contribution to Italian political life.

On my part I was still entertaining the hope of founding a strong party of Christian democratic inspiration without breach of the instructions of the Holy See on Catholic Action (I was then life member of the General Council of the Catholic Economic Social Union and elected member of the National Council of the Catholic Electoral Union), and my main work in those years was directed to the formation of a political consciousness among the masses and the youth.

The constitution of a center of all Catholic activity, called Central Committee of Catholic Action of which I was nominated general secretary, was due to Benedict XV, a few months after he had been made pope. These were the years of the World War and to my duties of mayor of my town and vice president of the Italian Communes Association were added those of a member of the National Food Board. At the same time I pushed reforms in local government. I founded and fostered a national institute for war orphans, the association of private educational institutions, the National Consortium for Emigrant Assistance. I finally cooperated in the definitive formation of a Confederation of Christian Workers which in a short time had one million two hundred thousand members (while the socialist confederation had only one and a half million members after twenty years of activity).

A few days after the armistice I went to Milan to deliver an address on the duties of Catholics in the post-War period, clearly indicating the necessity of a party on a democratic basis, and hinting at the solution of the Roman Question. Cardinal Ferrari, who was present at the address (and who was my host) asked me if I had any previous interview with the papal Secretary of State. I answered no, adding that a similar initiative had to be undertaken by private citizens under their responsibility, and certainly not by the ecclesiastical authorities, who would have thus entered the political arena. The cardinal seemed convinced, but suggested that I should obtain the revo-

* The talk was subsequently published in pamphlet form. It was published as an appendix to my book "Sintesi Sociali" (1905), and published again as a document in appendix to my volume "Dall' Idea al Fatto" (1919) after the foundation of the Partito Popolare.

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cation of the *non expedit* which was still formally in force.

For this purpose, I, together with an authoritative friend, went to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri (the then Secretary of State) to expound my ideas; I told him that I believed that the appropriate moment for that initiative had arrived, and begged him to tell me whether the existence of the *non expedit* was an obstacle to it. He took up the matter with the pope and after a month (at the end of December, 1918) I received from Gasparri himself the answer that the *non expedit* would be removed at the pope's discretion, but that its existence was not considered an obstacle to the formation of a wholly independent "party among Catholics," which should not involve either the Catholic Action or the Holy See.

This was the exact answer I wanted. The reply was the "go ahead" signal. The Italian Popular Party was founded on January 18, 1919, and on that day a public appeal was sent forth "ai liberi e forti." I became the leader of the party, with the title of Political Secretary.

In his talk to the heads of the Catholic Action, held ten days earlier, Benedict XV underlined what he had already told the cardinals in his Christmas Eve address: that Catholic Action "by keeping itself above every problem of a purely material and political nature, embraces all manifestations of human life." Thus was a clear distinction drawn between Catholic Action and "political party among Catholics." The *non expedit* was abolished on November, 1919, and in the same month, the Italian Popular Party, facing the polls for the first time, obtained ninety-nine seats in the House of Deputies (out of a total of five hundred eight seats), constituting itself as a parliamentary center with a Christian democratic character.

It must not be imagined that through all these many years and events I did not look back with longing to my philosophical and sociological studies, to which, indeed, I returned from time to time. My publications were all occasioned by my practical activity, but they all showed the ripening of my sociological conceptions. Vilfredo Pareto, in a review of my "Indirizzi Politici e Riforma Statale" (1923), wrote that it was not a partisan political book but a scientific work.

When I took the road to exile (which I did not think would be so long) my return to theoretical efforts was a comforting experience. Then I realized that thirty years of political and social life were helping me to look at theories and facts with a greater sense of reality, and to develop more fully that sociological theory which has been the secret work of my whole life.

Disunion Now

A plea for a society based upon small autonomous units.

By **Hans Kohr**

WE like to believe that the misery into which the world has come is due to the fact that humanity is split into too many countries. And we like to believe that all the evils of our globe would be eliminated by simply doing away with the variety of states through uniting—the democracies now, the continents later, the world in the end. The usually cited examples for the feasibility of such unions are the United States of America and Switzerland.

As far as the United States is concerned, it is not a model after which Europe could be reshaped because it is not a union of different entities. There is no real differentiation between the peoples, languages, customs and races living in the various states. There is only one people, the American, living in the United States, which is plural in its name but not in fact. The United States *are* not a country, it *is* a country. The only lesson which can be drawn from its constitutional picture is that in spite of the uniformity of type it has produced, it was found more practicable to subdivide it into 48 states instead of trying to govern the entire continent through delegates from Washington. Thus *differentiations* were artificially created because this proved to be an easier way to achieve union than *unification*.

But more than the United States, it is Switzerland which is regarded as the proof of the feasibility of the unionist dreams even for the continent of Europe where they have neither a uniform type of continental man, nor a common language, nor a common cultural and historical background. There, in a tiny spot in the Alps, three arch-enemies — Italians, Germans and French — have united for the common purpose of freedom, peace and economic happiness. Switzerland, to the unionist, is the eternal example of the practicability of the living together of different nations, and, for this reason, he praises her as his holy land.

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But in reality Switzerland, too, proves something quite different from what she is meant to prove. The percentage of her three national groups (not speaking of the Romanche, her fourth nationality) is roughly 70 percent for the German, 20 percent for the French and 10 percent for the Italian speaking population. If these three national groups as such were the basis of her much-famed union, it would inevitably result in the domination of the large German speaking block over the other two nationalities, who would become degraded to the logical status of minorities representing only 30 percent of the total population. Indeed, the rules of democracy would favor this development, and the reason for the French and Italian speaking communities remaining in a chiefly German enterprise would be gone. No sense could be found in their keeping away from the more logical union with their own blood-relatives, who, through their number, have formed the powerful nations of Italy and France. No more sense could there be for the Germanic block to stay outside the Reich.

In fact the basis of the existence of Switzerland and the principle of living together of various national groups is not the federation of her three nationalities but the federation of her 22 states, which represent a *division* of her nationalities and thus create the essential precondition for any democratic federation: the physical balance of the participants, the approximate equality of numbers. The greatness of the Swiss idea, therefore, is the smallness of its cells from which it derives its guaranties. The Swiss from Geneva does not confront the Swiss from Zurich as a German to a French confederate, but as a confederate from the Republic of Geneva to a confederate from the Republic of Zurich. The citizen of German-speaking Uri is as much a foreigner to the citizen of German-speaking Unterwalden as he is to the citizen of Italian-speaking Tessin. Between the canton of St. Gallen and the Swiss federation is no intermediary organization in the form of "German-speaking cantons." The power delegated to Berne derives from the small member republic and not from the nationality, because Switzerland is a union of states, not of nations. It is important to realize that in Switzerland there live (in rough numbers) 700,000 Bernese, 650,000 Zürichois, 160,000 Genevese, etc., and not 2,500,000 Germans, 1,000,000 French and 500,000 Italians. The great number of proud, democratic and almost sovereign cantons, and the small number of the individual cantonal populations eliminates all possible imperialist ambitions on the part of any one canton, because it would always be outnumbered by even a very small combination of others. If ever, in the course of contemporary simplification and rationalization, an attempt to reorganize Switzerland on the basis of its nationalities should succeed, the 22 "superfluous" states with all their separate parliaments and governments would become three provinces: not of Switzerland, however, but of Germany, Italy and France.

Cantonal sovereignty

People who argue for a union of nations in Europe because they believe that *this* kind of union has been realized and thus proved its practicability in Switzerland, have never based their wonderful schemes on the principle of cantonal or small-state sovereignty. The *national* idea has so much troubled the minds of the political thinkers that, in contrast, the notion of *state,* which is so much more flexible, adaptable and multipliable than that of *nation,* has almost completely gone out of use. For virtue has been seen only in great and greater entities, while smaller entities have been thought and taught to be the source of all mischief and evil. We have been educated in the worship of the bulk, of the large, of the universal, of the colossal, and have come away from the miniscule, the completeness and universality on the smallest scale—the individual, which is the protoplasm of all social life. We have learned to praise the unification of France, Britain, Italy and Germany in the belief that they would give birth to a unified humanity. But they created only Great Powers.

If the Swiss experience should be applied to Europe, also the Swiss technique—not merely the appearance of its result—will have to be employed. This consists in the dividing of three or any number of unequal blocks into as many smaller parts as is necessary to eliminate any sizable numerical preponderance. That is to say that one should create 40 or 50 equally small states instead of 4 or 5 unequally large ones. Otherwise even a federated Europe will always contain 80 million Germans, 45 million French, 45 million Italians, etc., which means that any European federation would end up in a German hegemony with just the same inevitability as the German federation, in which 24 small states were linked to the one 40-million Power of Prussia ended up in Prussian hegemony.

The suggestion, therefore, is to split Germany up into a number of states of seven to ten million inhabitants. This could be easily done since the former German states (or a number of them) could be reconstructed, and even Prussia could be divided on a natural and historic basis. The splitting up of Germany alone, however, would have no permanent effect. With the natural tendency of all growing things, Germany would reunite unless the whole of Europe were to be cantonized at the same time. France, Italy and Russia must be divided too. Also in their cases their historical backgrounds would make the task easy: we shall again have a Venezia, a Lombardy, a Burgundy,

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a Savoy, an Esthonia, a White Russia, etc. But as with the German states, here also the new (or old) entities would again grow together on racial lines unless they be brought together in *new combinations* making the creation of national states impossible. That is to say, the true meaning of Switzerland or the Austro-Hungarian Empire will have to be realized in many new instances: the small states would be federated, but not with their nearest relative, so that the new map of Europe might show a Pomerania-West-Poland, an East-Prussia-Baltica, an Austria-Hungary-Czechoslovakia, a Baden-Burgundy, a Lombardy-Savoy, etc. Then the Great Powers, which are the womb of all modern wars, because they alone are strong enough to give to war its modern frightfulness, shall have disappeared. But only through splitting up the entire continent of Europe will it be possible to eliminate honorably Germany or any other Great Power without having to inflict on any the odium of a new Versailles. Once Europe is divided into small enough parcels, we shall have the Swiss foundation of a Pan European Union, based not on the collaboration of powerful nations but on the smallness of *all* of the states.

Glorifying the small

All this is a defense of the much-ridiculed principle which glorifies the sovereignty of the smallest and not of the largest state-entity—*Kleinstaaterei,* as the Germans say. The theorists of our time who seem to be able to see only the large and get emotional over words like "humanity" (no one knows what it really means and why one should *die* for it) call the very idea of creating more instead of fewer states medieval backwardness. They are all out for unionism and colossalism, though unionism is nothing really but another expression for totalitarianism, even if it is thought to be a guarantee for peace. It is the one-party system transplanted into the international field. Against the scorn of our theorists I would like to point out only a very few of the advantages of this "medieval" scheme. The unionist will say that the time when hundreds of states existed was dark and that wars were waged almost continuously. That is true. But what were these wars like? The Duke of Tyrol declared war on the Margrave of Bavaria for a stolen horse. The war lasted two weeks. There was one dead and six wounded. A village was captured and all the wine drunk which was in the cellar of the inn. Peace was made and $35 was paid for reparations. The adjoining Duchy of Lichtenstein and the Archbishopric of Salzburg never learned that there had been a war on at all. There was war in some corner of Europe almost every day, but they were wars with little effects. Today we have relatively few wars, and they are for no better reason than a stolen horse. But the effects are tremendous.

Also economically the advantages of the coexistence of many little states were enormous, although the modern synchronizers and economists will not agree with this since they have got accustomed to see the world standing on their heads. Instead of one administration we had twenty, instead of two hundred parliamentarians we had two thousand, and, thus, instead of the ambitions of only a few the ambitions of many could be satisfied. There were no unemployed, because there were too many identical professions which competed less because they were exercised in more countries. There was no necessity for socialism (another totalitarian notion), because the economic life of a small country could be supervised from any church tower without the interpretations (brilliant though they be) of a Marx or Schacht. There was the development of the arts in the many capitals which excelled in the creation of universities, theaters and in the production of poets, philosophers and architects. And there were no more taxes than we have now, in the age of rationalization, where people and enterprises have been "economized" for economic reasons and the phenomenon of unemployment has come into existence. We have done away with what we thought was the waste of courts and kings and have created thereby the splendor of the dictators' marching millions. We have ridiculed the many little states; now we are terrorized by their few successors.

Not only history but also our own experience has taught us that true democracy in Europe can only be achieved in little states. Only there the individual can retain his place and dignity. And if democracy is a worth-while idea, we have to create again the conditions for its development, the small state, and give the glory of sovereignty (instead of curtailing an institution from which no one wants to depart) to the smallest community and to as many as possible. It will be easy to unite *small* states under one continental federal system and thus also satisfy, secondarily, those who want to live on universal terms. Such a Europe is like a fertile inspiration and a grandiose picture, although not a modern one which you paint in one dull line. It will be like a mosaic with fascinating variations and diversity, but also with the harmony of the organic and living whole.

This is a ridiculous scheme, conceived for man as a witty, vivacious and individualistic reality. Unionism, on the other hand, is a deadly serious scheme without humor, meant for men as a collectivity and as social animals of lower order; and it reminds me constantly, in all its earnest elaborateness of the German Professor who submitted to Satan a new plan for organizing Hell. Whereupon Satan answered with rock-shaking laughter: "Organize Hell? My dear Professor, organization, that *is* Hell."

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Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

AS A SUPPORTER of the Fight for Freedom Committee's stand in the war controversy, I naturally read the Reverend Florence D. Cohalan's article in the September 12 issue of THE COMMONWEAL with special interest. As a Catholic layman, I am particularly concerned with Father Cohalan's opinions regarding the stand taken by American Catholics, whether they be members or not members of the Fight for Freedom Committee, who support American intervention in the war not only because, as American citizens, they believe such intervention to be beneficial to our national interests but also because they believe that the teachings of the Church as they understand them justifies their interventionist policies on moral as well as patriotic grounds. I use the phrase, "the teachings of the Church as they (the Catholics who are interventionists) understand them" not as a confession of—still less as a profession of—the employment by Catholic interventionists of the false principle of absolute private judgment in moral matters; but simply as a phrase descriptive of the actual process which American Catholic citizens are obliged by the existing circumstances to use in reaching their conclusions as to whether the nation is or is not morally justified in intervening in the war. It seems to me that those American Catholic citizens who oppose intervention, on moral as well as patriotic grounds, arrive at their reasoned conclusions in precisely the same manner as do the interventionists, as far as the moral considerations as taught by the adequate authority of the Church are concerned in their thinking. And how could it be otherwise?

So far indeed American Catholics have not been authoritatively instructed either by the Holy See or the American hierarchy as to how they could act in their capacity as citizens in supporting or opposing a policy of intervention in the war. Yet Catholics necessarily are under a moral obligation to guide their thinking and their actions as citizens by the principles of morality as expounded by the Church. In performing that duty, they are compelled, by the very nature of their situation, to employ their own best judgment as individuals. If then these individuals associate with other like-minded individuals in groups, committees, associations, political parties, of diverse or even directly conflicting opinions, is that not a perfectly natural and legitimate process in a free country? Is it not similar to the fashion in which throughout some two thousand years all the great theological, moral and sociological problems of the Church itself have been agitated, discussed, debated and gradually defined with conclusive authority?

Take a question connected with, but still less immediately grave and acute than active intervention in the war by our nation, namely, that of giving or withholding approbation and support of the present administration's foreign policy and the actual steps taken by our President in exercising his executive power. Among the members of the Catholic hierarchy in our country there are some who strongly and openly speak out in favor of the administration generally and the President particularly, and there are others who as strongly oppose both. It may be presumed most confidently that these Bishops who take different points of view have all been guided in reaching their conclusions by their own understanding of the force and bearing of the moral principles involved, as defined by the highest authority in the Church. In other words, they have employed the same process of conscientious personal judgment as I believe the Catholic interventionists as well as the Catholic isolationists of less than episcopal authority have employed. In short, neither group can legitimately presume to speak on behalf of the legislative authority of the Church, but certainly it would seem entirely proper for members of either group to argue—if they do so honestly, which of course ought to be presumed—that the course they advocate is more firmly grounded on the moral principles taught by the Church than the contrary course. That course, it seems to me, is the one followed by the Catholic supporters and members of the Fight for Freedom Committee. They may or may not address their fellow American Catholics, as Father Cohalan describes them as doing, "in shrill, if not hysterical, tones," but that they have a duty as well as a right to uphold the legitimate authority of their government's foreign policy and to argue for its logical development in full intervention, should that be necessary, seems all too plain.

Father Cohalan asks whether Catholic interventionists "view Hitler primarily as a menace to Anglo-American world hegemony or as a menace to the Catholic Church?" I think that question begs the really vital question raised by his article in general, namely, the question of how far individual Catholics may form their opinions on the main point of the war now presented to Americans, which is the question of their own national participation, as Catholics as well as nationals of a particular nation. His question implies the acceptance on his part of the motive attributed to their opponents by the nazis. There are ten nations allied with Great Britain against Germany and Italy in this war and their members are not fighting primarily for Anglo-American world hegemony, nor would Americans fight for that bugaboo if they joined the anti-Hitler allies. Father Cohalan admits that the English Catholics "are perfectly justified in aiding their native land in her struggle for survival."

Then again, by the same token, Austrian, Polish, French, Dutch, Norwegian Catholics, together with their fellow nationals of other religions, must also be perfectly justified in fighting Hitler; so too would American Catholics be justified, in the view of American interventionists, who believe on evidence massive enough to fill this issue of THE COMMONWEAL if presented in the most condensed fashion, and perfectly apparent, so it seems to them, to those who have realized the nature of the nazi revolution that this nation's survival in its established and historic freedom is directly menaced by the hitherto-successful world-sweep of the nazi revolution.

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Communications

PETER'S BARK

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: It appears from an article by Father Cohalan (September 12) that some anonymous ad-writer for the Fight for Freedom was so ill-advised and ill-informed as to state in an advertisement of that organization's addressed to Catholics that "the interests of the Catholic Church demand America's entry into the war."

If Father Cohalan had addressed his rebuke to this ad-writer, comment would be superfluous. . . . But what one should *not* do, if possessed of any degree of information whatever, would be to imagine that the interests of the Church *do* demand entry into war by America or anyone. The Church does not so defend *its* interests. All Catholics know this; most informed non-Catholics know it.

I happen to be a Catholic. I happen also to approve the objective of the FFF, which in simple fact is nothing but the objective of the constitutionally adopted foreign policy of the American people. I happen also to think, rightly or wrongly, that my approval of that policy is a moral act based on moral considerations and in every possible way consonant with all the teachings of the Church. But I do not for a moment imagine that these considerations, these moral considerations, are Catholic in any restricted sense; or that arriving at them involves anything but an exercise of reason coupled with that modicum of good will which can be predicated of all of us. If I say therefore that as a Catholic I support this policy I cannot be charged with pretending to bind the Church; and I have no such erroneous intention. Nor, transparently, have Catholic members of the FFF.

But both as a Catholic and as a supporter of the nation's foreign policy I strongly object to the Church's silence in this field of opinion being given the false interpretation assigned it by Father Cohalan. He writes: "The obligation to enter the war . . . is of so grave a nature that it can be accepted only on the unqualified pronouncement of the highest authority." This does not mean governmental authority; it means ecclesiastical authority. This, I submit, is false. The Church does not pass upon the moral obligation to support concrete national policies; it could not do so without simultaneously passing on the policies themselves; and that it leaves, by Divine instruction thereon, to Caesar—to the state, its citizens. Think of the fun an anti-Popery orator would have with Father Cohalan's astounding statement. In it he would find ample confirmation of every ugly lie he ever spawned regarding the servility of Catholics, their obedience to a foreign power, and all the rest of the rigamarole this crew go in for.

Father Cohalan's succeeding inference from this amazing statement is that since the Church has not pronounced upon the moral obligation of Catholics in this matter, *they have none,* and he proves this by asserting that the only alternative is that the Church's teaching authority has been suspended! It has; and long may it remain so . . . in this field. No Catholic would have it other.

Father Cohalan knows these facts quite as well as the writer. If he has forgotten them momentarily, it is because he has a thesis, and is oblivious to its implications. *Roma locuta est, cause finita est* is an old and honorable and veracious apothegm "Roma *non* locuta est, ergo . . . have nothing to do with anyone who *has* spoken, *has* formed a moral judgment . . ." is a theology fathered only by Father Cohalan.

If Father Cohalan's thesis were true, the many Catholics who at various times have entered American wars and *urged* American wars would all of them be guilty of rash judgment; of acting without a supposedly necessary ecclesiastical sanction. This is absurd. The Church neither has nor pretends to have any wisdom in such matters that is not available to all. The Church scrupulously refrains from playing a rôle in political issues.

G. R. GARRETT.

South Bend, Ind.,

TO the Editors: Regarding Father Cohalan's article, I would have saved myself a lot of trouble if I had first turned to the sentence beginning his last paragraph, where he says "The war is basically a struggle for economic and political power." Very interesting. The Catholic Church suffers one of its worst persecutions in history. Protestant pastors languish in prison for heroic defense of their Christian ideals. But this war in essence, it is said, is economic and political.

Jews are tortured and humiliated simply because they were born Jews. An economic and political war! Hundreds of Polish priests murdered in cold blood, thousands rotting in cells. . . . Every principle of human dignity assailed, every value in religion and culture assaulted. Crime piled upon crime, outrage upon oturage, by the forces of barbarism. The Czech intellectual class blotted out, professors tortured, students shot. Greek fathers and mothers stand with heads bowed over the graves of sons who fought for the right to live their own lives. In Norway, in Jugoslavia, the same story. But all this, we are told, is "impulsive and secondary" with the nazis. For this war is basically economic and political!

Only those afflicted with moral cowardice or mental astigmatism could stomach the explanatory tone of this article. I repeat what I have often said recently: because of the nazi threat to religion, culture and American liberty, American Catholics have a solemn moral obligation to support to the limit the President of the United States in his efforts to check and destroy the nazi tyranny. I don't have to seek the approval of the hierarchy to defend my own life or to assist my brother in distress, and I do not believe the hierarchy expects me to await its word before I advocate strong action in defense of my country and in defense of the religious and cultural values now threatened by nazi nihilism, especially when my stand is in harmony with the tendencies of the national policy.

I have given up trying to convince certain of my fellow-Catholics that there is no other reasonable course today. About all I can now do is to persuade in my small way the bulk of Americans that by no means all of us are engaged in betraying our country.

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Ponder over this sentence from "Mein Kampf," Father Cohalan, and then try to continue saying that this war is basically economic and political: "The program of a *view of life* means the formulation of a declaration of war against an existing order, against an existing condition, in short, against an existing conception of life in general." How Hitler would laugh at some of his unwitting apologists!

FRANCIS E. MCMAHON.

Long Beach, N. Y.

TO the Editors: It is a long while since I have read in THE COMMONWEAL such a confusing article as "Volunteer Pilots for Peter's Bark." Lest I be guilty of the same error which I charge up to Father Cohalan, let me at the outset quote Tanquerey's definition of moral obligations: "an internal and moral bond moving the conscience always and everywhere to do or desist from some human act." I am convinced that the whole discussion between isolationists and interventionists hinges ultimately on the proper concept of what is meant by a moral obligation. In passing, let me say in all frankness that I am equally convinced that the isolationists consistently dodge any discussion of America's moral obligations in international affairs, their argument is a tissue of shibboleths about the futility of shedding American blood that blinds them to the grave issues that might justify such bloodshed.

It is not a little disheartening to see how many American Catholics have been influenced by isolationist appeals. Father Cohalan's article is a full-blown example within our own ranks of the Peace-Party-Line which uses the word "propaganda" to evade coming to a decision or even a conclusion on the question of America's duty in World War II. Commenting wittily on this technique, Arnold Lunn has recently written, wondering whether we must rewrite the story of the man who was left for dead by the thieves who stripped him on the road to Jericho: "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw the man who had fallen among thieves, he said unto him, 'No propaganda, please,' and passed by on the other side."

The parable of the Good Samaritan, as far as we know, effectively silenced the lawyer who thought he had found a clever evasion of the second great commandment when he asked, "And who is my neighbor?" Unfortunately, it does not silence our modern lawyers who have outstripped their prototype in comebacks. The new exegisis melts and dissolves the very substance of the parable itself, making even the Samaritan a changed character. He not only refuses to listen, but justifies his "passing by" the stricken victim because of the previous bad example of the priest and the Levite. He is better informed this time about what has gone on before and therefore, perhaps, is less ethical in his approach. In the modern world it is no longer a necessity to come to a conclusion on particular issues involving moral principles. You are excused from all anxiety if you can point to examples like the Mexican Question or the Spanish Civil War, where there was not much of a serious discussion, let alone a decision, about what should have been done. . . .

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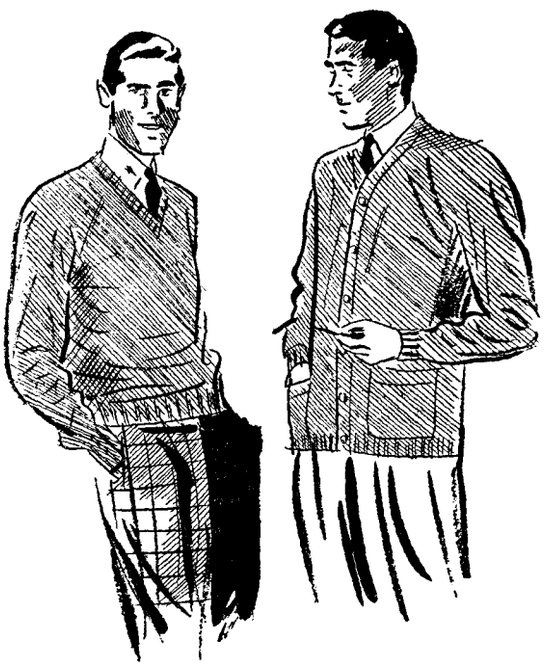

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Those who have read his article will recognize that it is impossible to deal in the space at hand with all the points Father Cohalan raises to confuse the issue. His technique is akin to that used by opponents of the Church who obscure its real claims by a cloud of dust of all the obnoxious and unsavory incidents in its human history. We can only reply: "Tragic, true; but irrelevant."

Before coming to grips with the question of America's duty to intervene it is better to clear the atmosphere by answering the objections of one's opponent. Let me then try to outline a refutation of the main objections put forth.

First: Father Cohalan fails to make the necessary distinctions. The Catholic members of the Fight for Freedom group are aware the World War II is not, and, as Jacques Maritain has repeatedly written, *cannot* be a holy war. If it were, then we would be justified in awaiting a call to arms by the proper ecclesiastical authorities. The FFF feels that it has work to do as long as American remains a democracy and not a theocracy.

Second: Moral obligations may be decided not only by authority, but by reason enlightened by revelation. Educated Catholics are all taught that conscience is reason applying the law of God or nature to a particular action or commission. Europe is not Catholic, not even Christian. But Europeans are nevertheless human beings with obligations and a conscience. Moreover, they and all men are potential members of the Mystical Body. Christ died for them as well as for Christians (John ii. 2), and He has commanded us to love all men, even the enemies of God. The drift of Father Cohalan's article is dangerously toward a revocation of Christ's "New Commandment." On the other hand, the FFF is completely within its human rights to argue the justice of the Allied cause and to discuss America's duty thereby.

Third: Father Cohalan speaks of the amusement and contempt with which the American people have watched the efforts of communists here to follow the Moscow party line. He adds that the interventionists are in the same plight in regard to policies determined in London. This, I submit, is an odious comparison which overlooks the essential ethical differences in the ends respectively pursued by London and Moscow. All but the blind in America agree that England is waging as just (not religious) a war as was ever waged in history.

Fourth: Perhaps there is space to point out a serious omission which, I suspect, is fundamental to Father Cohalan's failure to meet squarely the interventionist issue. Like many Catholics who are on the fence, he seems to have forgotten that as long ago as 1920 Pope Benedict XV sounded the death knell of isolationism in his encyclical on International Reconciliation: "It is truly desirable that all states should put aside mutual suspicion and unite in one sole society, or rather family of peoples, both to guarantee their own indepedence and safeguard order in the civil concert of peoples." Saint Thomas says that war is fought for the sake of peace. The isolationists reject in principle this idea of a "League of Nations" (ibid.) as part of the future peace for which we all pray. Therefore it is not surprising to find that they have a much more distorted perspective where the present war is concerned.

In conclusion: The functioning of the FFF to which Father Cohalan so strenuously objects is on his own argument that very thing that we should expect him to embrace. The present crisis, he says and I agree, "is caused by the rejection of Christian standards in public and private life." The existence of the FFF is encouraging proof that at least a leaven of Christianity is at work in our world. Indeed, its conception of the proper use of this leaven is more Catholic and Christian than the vague "good will" for which Father Cohalan bids us pray. The world needs good sense as well as good will. To identify Christianity with the latter alone is to hasten rather than reverse the four-hundred-year-old process of driving Christianity out of existence altogether. Father Cohalan's plea turns out to be an overture to the last stage in that disintegration of the West which as a Catholic he must deeply deplore.

REV. VINCENT A. BROWN.

Staten Island, N. Y.

TO the Editors: My article was intended to prove that the so-called moral argument for our entry into the war is unsound in principle and dangerous in practice. It dealt only with our obligation as Catholics, not with our politics as Americans; and it is hard to believe that anyone really interprets it as an attempt to substitute the authority of the hierarchy for the authority of Congress. Representative government is indeed threatened today in America, but not by the bishops.

Mr. McMahon's catalogue of the horrors of our times would be more impressive if it were less selective. He omits the Mexican and Spanish martyrs, and even the Polish, Lithuanian and Russian victims of the Soviet régime. It is easy to understand why their sufferings received neither attention nor sympathy from most of the non-Catholics who denounce, rightly, the crimes of the nazis; but surely they deserve something better from those of the household of the Faith. Most of the crimes he lists were committed after the outbreak of the war, and none of those on his list can correctly be described as the cause of the war. To say the war is basically economic and political is not to say that it is solely such. We must concern ourselves with the motives of the belligerent governments, not with the feelings of some of their supporters.

There are some astonishing things in Father Brown's letter; but none as astonishing as his statement that: "The existence of the FFF is encouraging proof that at least a leaven of Christianity is at work in our world." Is it too much to suggest, as priest to priest, that the existence of the Catholic Church is sufficient evidence of that?

FLORENCE D. COHALAN.

The Stage & Screen

The Wookey

"THE WOOKEY" is a play about the little people of England under the nazi terror, and if it is no masterpiece, it is poignant in much of its characterization, admirably staged and acted. Probably Senator Nye will

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not approve of it, for it tells the tale of a Cockney tugboat captain who is a synthesis of all the qualities which have enabled the English to bear up under the Hitler bombing. Perhaps no such character as Mr. Wookey ever really existed, but then neither did Mr. Micawber or Mr. Pickwick. It would be presumptuous to connect Mr. Frederick Hazlitt Brennan with the immortal name of Dickens, and yet there is something Dickensian in the heroic tugboat captain who at first refuses to have anything to do with the war because the British government had ignored his warnings of what would be the outcome of the policy of appeasement, but who when the crisis comes takes his boat to Dunkirk, tows to safety a disabled destroyer, and then has his boat seized by a court order because he owes the bill for its oil. Later he becomes the leader of the civilian warders of his section of the London docks, loses his wife in the collapse of his house, gets the rest of his family to safety and climbs from his cellar with a machine gun and a belt of cartridges to fire at an oncoming raid. Mr. Wookey is master of his home, his family, and his fate; it is Mr. Brennan's evident intention to show him also as the master of the fate of England. So poignantly is he drawn that the man does become this symbol. Of course to this man and the men like him our hearts had already gone out before the curtain rises, and so we are ready to believe in him and to give him our cheers and tears, but none the less his dramatist has done a shrewd and workmanlike job.

Had Mr. Wookey, however, been portrayed by anyone other than Edmund Gwenn some of his bite and flavor would have been lost. It is Mr. Gwenn who raises the man from the specific to the universal. What Mr. Brennan sketched Mr. Gwenn completes. His vitality, his dynamic gusto, his richness, his charm are probably more than half the actor's. The sweetness of Mr. Gwenn's smile, the menace of his voice, the racy drive of his personality must be seen and heard to be understood. Edmund Gwenn, too old to fight, must be proud of his contribution to the effort of his native land. Of his coadjutors special words of praise should go to George Sturgeon for an incisive and lifelike performance as Mr. Wookey's son and heir, to Heather Angel for her simple but telling emotion as his daughter, to Norah Howard for her quiet cockney dignity as his wife, to Carol Goodner for her earthy but appealing impersonation of Aunt Gen, who is in show-business, to Henry Mowbray as a pompous bobby and to Horace McNally as an Irish lover. And Robert Sinclair's direction and Jo Mielziner's scenery are able adjuncts. If "Mr. Wookey" is British propaganda, it is only such in the sense that a London air-raid and the heroism of those who sustain it are propaganda. Marshal Goering has made sure that such propaganda should exist. (*At the Plymouth Theatre.*)

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Films for Relaxation

THE MAIN TROUBLE when cinema tackles a semi-mystery like *"Poison Pen"* is that movie-wise audiences know that the film's star is not in the picture just to be the quiet and unimportant sister of the vicar of this peaceful little English village in which all this monkey business is occurring. You keep your eye on Flora Robson because you know she's a fine actress and will be up to something; and I suppose I'm not giving too much away when I tell you she does turn out to be the villainess of the piece. Anyway, "Poison Pen" is not really a mystery; it is a study in psychopathic degeneration—and an interesting one in spite of its being far fetched and too harrowing. Into a small, countrified community, that could be Cranford or any of the George Eliot villages, suddenly comes a disturbing element when the villagers receive nasty, accusing anonymous letters. The receivers of these missives are upset no end because while the letters contain a pack of dirty lies they also contain a bit of scandalous truth. The resulting turmoil leads to insidious witch-hunting. Not until after some mean villages harpies goad one suspect into suicide and the town tough kills another innocent victim does Scotland Yard step in to track down the guilty one, who is a psychopathic old maid with a mother complex. Like many of the minor English films, this one merits your attention for its performances—not only of Miss Robson and Robert Newton in the leads, but also of the supporting cast as villagers. Paul L. Stein directed this story by Richard Llewellyn who is, quite rightly, better known for "How Green Was My Valley."

Or if movie fans want something more typically Hollywood, there are other items to brighten up their day. *"Sun Valley Serenade"* glistens gaily with gorgeous ski shots and snowy views of the famous Idaho resort in the mountains. Sonja Henie, who has always been a cinema casting problem, is this time a naïve refugee from Norway who finds herself in the care of handsome John Payne. Director H. Bruce Humberstone doesn't fuss around with too much plot but entertains mainly with specialty numbers by Glenn Miller and his orchestra, who play their

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clever arrangements. The best of these is "Chattanooga Choo Choo" which proves good for the eyes too when the Nicholas Brothers dance. Outstanding in the picture are the beautiful ice ballet led by Miss Henie on what looks like a black mirror, and a whole series of sporty winter costumes led by one knockout of a sweater that encases Payne's broad shoulders.

"Lady Be Good" is not to be confused with the musical comedy of the twenties—although several of George Gershwin's swell songs are retained, thank goodness. The picture shows how a composer of songs (Robert Young) and a writer of lyrics (Ann Sothern) get together, separate, get together, separate, get . . . etc. It seems that the piano genius, who behaves very badly throughout, is not such a genius when Ann's gone—therefore the flitting in and out of marriage. When they're together they make a pile of money by composing such hits as Gershwin's "Lady Be Good" and "Your Words and My Music." The songs are sung by Ann and Robert and everyone else including Eleanor Powell, who also does a superior dance to "Fascinating Rhythm," John Carroll, who is present mainly to make Robert jealous and pair off with Eleanor in the finale, Virginia O'Brien, whose wonderful dead-pan delivery still steals scenes, and Red Skelton, who brightens up the dull spots of which there are too many. Director Norman Z. McLeod could have speeded up his show by forgetting half the inane plot. Ann Sothern, who has shown before that she can act, now proves she can sing—even such slightly wornout numbers as last winter's "The Last Time I Saw Paris."

Best in *"Badlands of Dakota"* are the scenery and the surprisingly frank statement made by the heroine of this artificial life-in-the-raw film. The real pioneers of this country are the settlers who farmed, built homes and raised families—not the spectacular Bill Hickoks, Calamity Janes and Custers. Of course this winning-the-West film emphasizes the rough stuff and all the trouble the peace-loving citizens had in establishing law and order during the 70's. Richard Dix makes a quiet, calm but quick-triggered Hickok. Frances Farmer, as hard-boiled Jane, gets hysterical over Brod Crawford who goes really bad when his brother, Robert Stack, marries Ann Rutherford with whom Brod hoped to hitch up. However, Director Alfred E. Green wasn't too anxious to stick to fact or realism and his film turns out to be synthetic with Indians swooping down to burn Deadwood, all the villains rushing in to rob the bank, and the two brothers getting overly dramatic and mushy.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Two Non-Fiction

Reveille in Washington. Margaret Leech. Harper. $3.50.

FIVE YEARS ago, when Margaret Leech (Mrs. Ralph Pulitzer) started work on her projected biography of the City of Washington during the Civil War, she could scarcely have realized how timely her book would be when it finally was published. "Reveille in Washington" is precisely that. It was no accident that led President Roosevelt to quote Lincoln in a recent speech; the situation today is indeed very much what it was in those days: a president deeply anxious over the outcome of a conflict on which the people are both apathetic and divided. Most Americans today do not even question whether Lincoln was right; we take that for granted. A lot of Americans do question Roosevelt's foreign policy. They are incensed that he should compare himself to Lincoln. Yet historically he has every right to do so. For if anything the North in Lincoln's day was even more deeply divided, and large sections of the population were even more deeply apathetic, than is the case in 1941.

All this Margaret Leech's book admirably demonstrates. The picture she paints is one to rejoice Hitler's heart at a superficial reading: disorganization, inefficiency, stupidity, venality, treachery, vanity in almost every department of Union activity. When a character is efficient, like Stanton, he is mean. Practically no one comes out with a clean bill of health. Lincoln, of course, except for his lack of proper personal caution; Grant, who still is rather colorless; Sherman and Sheridan and some of the minor characters: Clara Barton, Frederick Law Olmsted, Walt Whitman, Louisa Alcott. Here is a blood-chilling picture of the evils attendant on a democratic organization of society. Yet in the long pull, despite the discouragements, the seemingly hopeless lack of able military leadership, the horrible mistakes and hesitations, the North was able to win. Proper leaders were gradually boiled up to the top in the formless broth. Almost providentially events forestalled political folly. Somehow order came out of chaos. And when the war was over, Washington had become a new city: not only was the dome of the Capitol completed, but a new life, a new importance had attached itself to the seat of the General Government—a government which had settled the question of its own permanence, and in doing so had added immeasurably to its own power and importance.

There are always men to wish that history had not been as it was. If only the Stuarts still ruled England; if only the federal power had not been so vastly increased by Northern victory; if only Lincoln had not been assassinated. To read "Reveille in Washington" is to stir many such wishes, to provoke us to the final of all wishes of the sort; if only man were different from what he is! But equally it serves to remind us that man is what he is, and that he is certainly no worse today than he was at some other point in his history. Cruelty, foolishness, sin (like courage, intelligence, goodness) are all constants in human life, and we had best accept them or we will be fools ourselves.

Miss Leech has written a useful book and a good book. Certainly it is readable—even exciting. One could quarrel with her over details. Her extensive use of newspapers as sources perhaps occasionally leads to sensationalism. Her ability as a narrator of military events (and the publishers' stinginess with maps) is far from satisfactory. But these are minor matters compared with the general quality of her achievement. For once I feel that I can without any hesitation or reserve recommend a book which is already on its way to being a best seller and express the hope that for the good of the country it will beat all records. The most violent of isolationists, the most rabid of interventionists will both and equally enjoy and learn from this volume.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

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The Red Decade. Eugene Lyons. Bobbs-Merrill. $3.00.

NOW that Joe Stalin is once more the champion of democracy, we are in for another wave of united fronts, fellow traveling and Trojan horsemanship. So it is a good time to have Mr. Lyons's very able and thorough exposé of "the Stalinist penetration of America" during the confused thirties—before the Hitler-Stalin alliance of August, 1939, tore the veil from the temple and revealed so many of our Amrican liberals in embarrassing postures. A good time for us, that is, but not for Mr. Lyons, whose book would probably have done much better while the comrades were still clearly recognized as villains in the piece. For confusion reigns again.

Eugene Lyons is editor of the *American Mercury* and was once a communist sympathizer himself until he went to Russia as a UP correspondent (1927-1933) and returned to chronicle his disillusion in the popular "Assignment in Utopia." He knows his subject thoroughly, and he can handle it in a lively, satiric style that is very readable. If the book has faults they are in the occasional bitterness and abusive exaggeration that creep in, and in the lack of documentation. Nevertheless the work is not a series of wild charges: names are named in abundance and quotations quoted. And Mr. Lyons is much too sensible and well-informed to have written another "Red Network." His case is clearly established, but the sources of proof might well have been included.

The title is a misnomer, however. For one thing, Lyons gives a very useful summary of the history of the Communist Party in America since the Russian revolution, analyzing the ties that have bound it so straitly to the ruling clique in Moscow. He divides this history into five periods (we are now in the sixth), which have been alternately "united front" and "revolutionary" as the political needs of Comrade Stalin demanded at the time.

Furthermore, it wasn't until the second half of the thirties—after the Party line took another hair-pin turn in 1935 toward collective-security, democracy and Popular Fronts—that American life could be said to show any notable tinge of red. And finally, if the democracies' alliance with Russia continues much longer there is reason to believe that the forties will see a much more serious "Stalinist penetration." For politicians and liberals have lamentably short memories.

It should be noted though that the Stalinists achieved their greatest success mostly by deception—by denying their true faith and protesting great devotion to civil liberties, representative government and peaceful reform. It was thus they built up their big "transmission belt" organizations: the American League for Peace and Democracy, American Youth Congress, the smaller, but even more influential League of American Writers, and scores of lesser fronts. The essential ingredient of all, however, was admiration—or at least benevolent tolerance—for the Russian experiment and excommunication for the Deweys, Eastmans, Gides, Farrells and Lyonses who questioned or criticized the "non-existent utopia."

Lyons doesn't devote much space to the labor movement, and perhaps it is just as well, for he is more at home among the intellectuals. But it is in the trade unions—especially the CIO—that communist penetration is most dangerous and most alarming, as we began suddenly to discover in the midst of pre-June defense strikes. Here the Stalinists have been successful not so much by deception as by good hard work and superior organization. And the Russo-German alliance had little effect on that success,

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NEXT WEEK

AS THE CORRESPONDENCE COLUMNS of this week's COMMONWEAL demonstrate, Father Cohalan's "Volunteer Pilots for Peter's Bark" has aroused much interest and even indignant comment; Mr. Williams also devotes his column to the subject this week. Next week THE COMMONWEAL will publish further discussion from some of its contributing editors.

WE ARE FORTUNATE to be able to promise our readers an account of the problems of French Catholics under the régime of Marshal Pétain. It is written by a man admirably equipped to know the facts, but one whose name for obvious reasons must remain a secret. He writes under the pseudonym of Herbert Morris, and all lovers of French Catholicism will welcome the new light he sheds on the difficulties of his compatriots and coreligionists.

FROM ENGLAND Christopher Hollis writes a revolutionary suggestion as to how, after the war is over, one of the main social problems of our world **might** be solved. Mr. Hollis is none too hopeful of the suggestion's being accepted.

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since by then jobs were involved much more than ideas or foreign policies.

Which leads us to point out a final weakness of "The Red Decade": the failure to account for or give credit to the amazing zeal of the comrades. Certainly we are not going to destroy communism by outlawing the Party, as Lyons recommends. This may well be necessary, for it is disturbing indeed to think that a foreign dictator can name his own candidates for American leadership and—in the case of the unions—that he frequently gets them elected.

But much more necessary than negative action is the development of a social, intellectual and labor leadership that can command the allegiance of Americans, that can combine all the dynamism and self-sacrifice of the stalinists with a completely honest devotion to human values. American Catholics could supply such leadership if they would. But Lyons wouldn't know about that. He is reporting the past, and so he ignores us almost completely which undoubtedly serves us right. JOHN C. CORT.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Color and Human Nature. W. Lloyd Warner, Buford H Warner and Walter A. Adams. American Council on Education. $2.25.

AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR of anthropology at the University of Chicago, a specialist in case history once associated with the Julius Rosenwald Foundation and a Negro, a psychiatrist, of Provident Hospital, have written a not bad study of the Negro mind in the struggle for existence in Northern cities.

Negroes are being studied everywhere, these days. In this book, as in many others, the colored people are divided and subdivided into classes, sets, groups; with variables and constants weighted and distributed all over the charts and scales. But when it is all done, we are told that colored people worry about their color, their hair, their social position. And the time that could be used thinking beautiful thoughts must be employed with thoughts not so beautiful, like Jewish artists in Paris five seconds after a German officer has been laid low by pistol shots. And why is the Negro world so distracted in this, our democratic America? The authors state the case clearly, succinctly: ". . . The more intelligent and sensitive, the more cultured and refined a Negro may be, and the more completely he assimilates and transmits the national ideals, the more seriously he is made to feel that his race, and race alone, bars him from enjoying the full rights of American citizenship. . . ." With these facts in hand again, we might ask ourselves about a program of action. There is not much left to find out. GEORGE STREATOR.

CONTRIBUTORS

Theodore MAYNARD has just returned to his publishers the proofs of his "Story of American Catholicism," from which this article is an excerpt. His last previous book was his biography of Queen Elizabeth.

Rev. Anthony MISUKIEWICZ is a priest of the Diocese of Erie, Pa., at present on sick leave.

Rev. Luigi STURZO was the founder of the Italian Popular Party, an important Catholic body before the advent of Mussolini to power. Don Sturzo is now living in Florida.

Hans KOHR is an Austrian political scientist now living in Washington, D. C.

John C. CORT is one of the founders of the ACTU now living in Long Island.

George STREATOR is a Negro publicist and authority on labor matters who has recently entered Government work.

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